

Pre-Application Advice – Notes and Charges
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
Local Government Act 2003

Under the Local Government Act 2003, the London Borough of Barnet operates a scheme of charging for pre-application advice on certain types of development proposals and certain development briefs. This leaflet provides guidance in respect of the charges, requirements and procedures.

The Council welcomes and encourages customers to seek pre-application advice, particularly for major or complex schemes. In order that a consistent and high quality pre-application advice service can be provided, the Council has decided that the cost of the service should be recovered directly and not fall as a cost to the council taxpayer.

Pre-application discussions and / or written advice are primarily of benefit to the applicant / developer by identifying the planning issues and requirements and thereby speeding up the development process; they can help to minimise subsequent planning application costs and avoid abortive applications.

Charges and Categories

The charges for pre-application advice are based primarily on the size and complexity of the proposed development, and whether a face to face meeting is included. Additional charges may also apply where meetings include additional specialist advice.

Additional premium level services are also available.

The base charges, officer rates and premium level charges are published in the “Planning Fees and Charges Schedule” available online: barnet.gov.uk

The charging regime covers the following categories of proposed development:

<u>Category ‘A+’ proposals</u> Very Large Scale, Complex Residential development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 150 or more residential units	Meeting and written advice
<u>Category ‘A’ proposals</u> Very Large Scale, Complex Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100 - 149 residential units• 4000m² or more of commercial floor space	Meeting and written advice
<u>Category ‘B’ proposals</u> Large Scale, Complex Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25 - 99 residential units• 2000m² - 3999m² of commercial floor space	Meeting and written advice

<p><u>Category 'C' proposals</u></p> <p>Major Complex Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 - 24 residential units • 1000m² - 1999m² of commercial floor space • Development involving a site of 0.5ha and over • Mixed use developments <p>Complex Proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large or complex change of use or development proposals e.g. sport and leisure proposals • Development requiring an EIA* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Note: EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) refers to development proposals which fall under the provision of categories 1 and 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999.</i> • Planning proposals which are associated with complex heritage listed building or conservation issues • Entertainment uses • Telecommunications equipment and masts – composite proposals for 10 or more sites. <p>Planning / development briefs / frameworks / master planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites for which the landowner wishes to establish their potential value, or where a clear and consistent advice for potential developers will expedite the development process. 	<p>Meeting and written advice</p>
<p><u>Category 'D+' proposals</u></p> <p>Minor development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-9 new residential units • 100-999 m² of commercial floorspace (including change of use) 	<p>Meeting and written advice</p>
<p><u>Category 'D' proposals</u></p> <p>Minor development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-4 new residential units • 100-999 m² of commercial floorspace (including change of use) • Individual proposals for Telecommunications equipment and masts • Advertisement application for hoardings 	<p>Written advice</p>

<p><u>Category ‘E’ proposals</u></p> <p>Creation of one residential unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of 1 additional residential house or flat • Replacement of an existing residential unit • Conversion of 1 property into 2 residential units <p>Note: Where there are complex heritage, listed building, conservation area or tree/landscaping issues, a replacement or additional dwelling may still fall within one of the above categories.</p>	Written advice
<p><u>Category ‘F’ proposals</u></p> <p>Small Scale development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small extensions / alterations (including advertisements) to commercial or similar premises, below 100m²; • Small changes of use to commercial or similar premises, below 100m² . • Other small scale developments below the threshold of category D. 	Written advice
<p><u>Category ‘G’ proposals</u></p> <p>Written Householder Advice – one house or a single flat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensions / development within the curtilage of the property. 	Written advice

Exemptions

The charging scheme will not apply to informal initial discussions in connection with very small business premises, or very minor schemes or householder schemes (small extensions / alterations), certificates of lawfulness, enforcement or advice to any local resident affected by a development. Such verbal advice at this time will continue to be provided free of charge.

Procedures

1. Categories A+ – D+

Form:

The online application form for these categories can be found at:
http://www.barnet.gov.uk/forms/form/204/en/request_for_pre-application_planning_advice

Fee:

The standard fee must be paid prior to the first meeting. The standard fee includes time taken by the case officer from the investigation stage to the actual meeting and the final written comment.

Any additional charges will be invoiced within 10 working days from the date of final comment and invoices must be settled within 21 days. Cheques should be made payable to 'Barnet Corporation.' If a meeting is cancelled charges may be made for any pre-meeting enquiries or any other investigations that have been carried out.

Process

You need to submit the form together with the appropriate fee and all relevant information. Any request for specialist advice should also been made at this stage (see hourly fee details below).

Within a week of receipt of your request, an acknowledgement letter with contact details for the planning case officer will be sent to you. The acknowledgment letter will advise whether your submission is accepted or whether any additional information is required before advice can be offered.

(Please note that the service has the right to decline a request for pre-application advice where it is not considered either appropriate or necessary).

Within 2 weeks after the validation of your request (subject to availability), the case officer will contact you to arrange a meeting date (and make any necessary arrangement for a site visit if required). Meetings are normally held at North London Business Park.

Within 3 weeks of the meeting date (providing no further research or site investigation is required), you will be sent an advice note outlining the policy context, site's history, site's constraints together with advice on relevant planning issues. All notes are reviewed by the relevant team's manager or Head of Service depending on the complexity of the proposals.

Further research or advice sought after the meeting will be charged at an hourly rate as detailed in the "Planning Fees and Charges Schedule".

We aim to operate a flexible system and we will try to adapt to your requirements including the format in which you wish to obtain the advice. For example, you may wish to delay obtaining final written notes until you amend your proposals in line with verbal advice given at the meeting. You may also want us to review your own meeting minutes/notes to speed up the process.

In any case, you should discuss your particular requirements with the case officer during the meeting.

2. Categories D – G

Form:

The application form for these categories can be found at:

http://www.barnet.gov.uk/forms/form/204/en/request_for_pre-application_planning_advice

Fee:

The standard category fee must be paid prior to the application being progressed. Cheques should be made payable to 'Barnet Corporation.'

Process:

Within a week of receipt of your request, an acknowledgement letter with contact details for the planning case officer will be sent to you. The acknowledgment letter will advise whether your submission is accepted or whether any additional information is required before advice can be offered.

(Please note that the service has the right to decline a request for pre-application advice where it is not considered either appropriate or necessary).

Within 3 weeks of the validation of your request, you will be sent an advice note outlining the policy context, site's history, site's constraints together with advice on relevant planning issues. All notes are reviewed by the relevant team's manager or Head of Service depending on the complexity of the proposals.

Categories E-G fees do not include a face to face meeting or a visit to the site. If you feel that your proposals would benefit from either or both, there will be an additional hourly charge (see "Planning Fees and Charges Schedule"). You should contact your case officer for further details – see section below for more details.

Additional fees including hourly rates and specialist advice

Those fees apply in the event of:

- additional investigations or meetings with the case officer being required for Categories A+-D+ development above and beyond the standard fee
- specialist advice, for example on housing or conservation matters. (Note that separate Highways advice is subject to a different charging scheme, please call the Highways Group on 020 8359 3047 for more details)
- any meetings or additional services including a site visit (and additional travel time) requested for Categories D-G development and not covered by the standard fee.

The appropriate hourly rate for officers' time is dependent upon their seniority, as set out in the "Planning Fees and Charges Schedule".

Scope for discussion or advice

The matters suitable for discussion / advice could include:

- Information on the relevant policies and other planning requirements.
- Provision of advice regarding the procedure, consultation, and estimated time scale in regard to the process of the application.
- The required information for making a valid planning application.
- Indication of the likely requirement for contributions by the developer, such as levels of affordable housing or highways and education payments.
- Informal and without prejudice comments and guidance on the content, construction and presentation of an application likely to satisfy the Council's planning policies.

Information required with pre-application request

The Council will require sufficient information to be provided to enable a quality advice service to be provided. This includes:

- A description of the proposed development and schedule of proposed uses
- A site location plan (scale 1:1250)
- Photographs and sketch drawings showing the site, buildings and trees as existing, together with the schedule of uses.
- Outline of proposal (on plans scale 1:200).
- Sketch drawings showing height / scale of development.
- For larger sites other information may be required including potentially
- EIA related information or a draft environmental statement.

Please Note:

Any advice given by Council officers for pre-application enquiries does not constitute a formal response or decision of the Council with regards to future planning consents.

Any views or opinions expressed are given in good faith, and to the best of ability, without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application, which will be subject to public consultation and ultimately decided by the Council.

You should therefore be aware that officers cannot give guarantees about the final formal decision that will be made on your planning or related applications. However, the advice note will be considered by the Council as a material consideration in the determination of the future planning related applications, subject to the proviso that circumstances and information may change or come to light that could alter the position.

It should be noted that little or no weight will be given to the content of the Council's pre-application advice for schemes submitted more than 3 years after the date of the advice being issued.

Speed in progress: for formal planning application submissions

The Service will seek to process all applications within the Department of Communities and Local Government prescribed period. It is highly likely that applications submitted following a pre-application discussion will typically progress faster, particularly where the proposals have taken on board the issues raised in the written note.

Joe Henry

**Assistant Director - Development Management and Building Control
London Borough of Barnet**

Martin Cowie

**Assistant Director – Strategic Planning & Regeneration
London Borough of Barnet**

Appendix

Contact points:

If you wish to discuss a proposal which is likely to be subject to a charge, you may also contact:

Major Project Team

Peter Alsop 020 8359 4658
Kevin Waters 020 8359 4516
Tom Wyld 020 8359 4675

Area Planning Units

Chipping Barnet Team (Barnet, East and New Barnet, Totteridge, Whetstone, Oakleigh and Brunswick)
Dave Prince 020 8359 4671

Hendon Team (Hendon, Mill Hill, Edgware, Brent Cross, West Hendon, Colindale and Burnt Oak)
Lesley Feldman 020 8359 4974
Heidi Euzger 020 8359 4720

Finchley and Golders Green (Finchley, Hampstead Garden Suburb, Golders Green and Cricklewood)
Fabien Gaudin 020 8359 4258
Karina Conway 020 8359 4985

Strategic Planning and Policy Unit

Nick Lynch 020 8359 4211

Footnote: If you are unhappy with the Planning Advice Service please write to: Joe Henry, Assistant Director of Development Management and Building Control, London Borough of Barnet, Building 4, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP.

Refund of fees: Fees can only be refunded if paid in respect of a query for which the local planning authority declines to provide advice or more than the correct fee was paid.